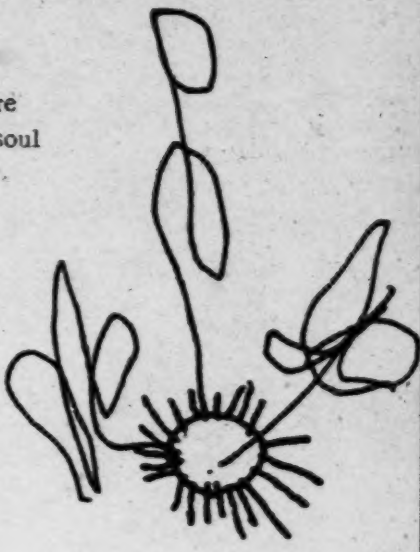
4: Wilbert--71 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

532

Cremation of a corpse. The fire forms spirals of smoke and the soul appears coming out of the body. Drawing of a Sanemá Indian.



532
772

Vision of the cosmos. God above the path of the sun and the earth. The "guapo" seated on a bench under the earth with animals. Drawing of a Sanemá Indian.

/233 cont./

539 to search the sun's house. Then the sun burned its surface and from that came the scars which show on its face.

The moon went to the other side of the world, and, while the sun sealed its friendship with man, the moon was his ir-
539 reconcilable enemy. When the moon appears rose-colored, it
821 is because it, along with its family, is eating men. The sun also has a family, but does not eat human flesh. Sometimes the moon hides in its house in order to plan a new campaign.
[532] During that time women are very much afraid and, in order to
[751] protect themselves, paint a likeness of the sun on their cheeks; they also commonly paint it on large stones which they find on the path.

/234/

OINEITĬB

539 Beneath the earth there exists the world of the dwarfs, who
[772] are called Oineitĭb. They live like men, but eat and speak very rapidly. They have no intestines or anus, and when they eat meat or other food, they cut it in pieces and swallow it raw, without chewing (25). They sometimes also eat women who conceal

[171] 25. See also the corresponding myth of the Yupa Indians of Venezuela (Wilbert, 1959d).

their menstruation. On one occasion the subterranean river grew so much that it acquired an enormous volume and gained so much strength that it blew out the earth beneath the ground of the rancheria in which there lived a woman who had tried to conceal her state. The houses collapsed and the inhabitants drowned, with the exception of the women, who were devoured by the dwarfs and their souls went to live forever with the guapo, who is also unable to go up to heaven and live with Omao.

Because the dwarfs have no intestines, they are always hungry and, for that reason, devour their food with much greediness. On occasion one of these dwarfs comes to earth to visit a man, but never a woman. The man cannot see his guest, but

/485/ cf./

765 This funerary gourd which contains the remains is kept with the other objects that belong to the family. Then, one [766] fine day, they prepare a soup of platanos in which they mix the powdered bone. The near relatives drink this soup. All weep at this moment, as at the first funeral.

775 The Guaika believe that the correct observance of these practices has much to do with the life of the person after his death. If they do not manage to recover the body of a man killed in war and cremate it, his death is considered a doubly great calamity. A statement such as that of "We shall not cremate you when you die" consequently means a powerful threat.

Religion

•[772] The Guaika /Waica/ have an idea that one ascends into heaven when one dies. This heaven is a good place, but less desirable than the present life. They also have an idea of hell, a place even less desirable to go to when one dies.

774 A person is for them body, soul, and spirit. The word to
775 designate soul also means "shadow" or "reflection." And the
828 word to designate spirit also means "cloud." Thus, the soul retains the form of the body, but the spirit can be formless.

The soul can abandon the body and return later. A seriously sick person in general loses consciousness while his soul is [753] absent. This is why they frequently go looking for the soul of a sick child, to return it to his body. The soul of an adult, on the other hand, should know how to find its way back.

The spirit abandons the body only with death.

775 A formal cremation and the rites which follow cremation help to ensure that the deceased, upon dying, will go to the most desirable place of the other life.

The Guaika believe that the spirits in heaven eat certain wild fruits. They are afraid that an enemy might /486/ return after death and cause sicknesses and other calamities to the people still corporeal. Many of these incorporeal spirits wander about the paths, especially at night. As we have said before, they are called "boles."

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

342

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342 →

Fig. 2-4.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

villages have a profound effect on the nature of the settlement pattern of Yąnomamö villages, and that this same milieu influences the rate at which larger villages fission into smaller, vulnerable groups.

Finally, I emphasize the importance of cultivation in this pattern of village movement and relocation, particularly in the context of relying on allies. Twice during the history of Kąobawä's group they were obliged to take refuge in the village of an ally. All during my fieldwork the Monou-teri also relied on hospitality of this sort from Kąobawä's group, as they were beleaguered by raids from the Patanowä-teri and had not yet completed their new garden. In short, the fact that the Yąnomamö rely heavily on cultivated food has led to specific obligations between members of allied villages: a good ally is one who will take you in when you are driven from your gardens by enemy raids. The essence of political life, therefore, is to develop stable alliances with neighboring villages so as to create a social network that potentially allows a local group to rely for long periods of time on the gardens of neighboring villages. I will describe the politics of alliance formation in Chapter 4, as it intimately bound up with feasting, trading, and marriage.

Intellectual Environment

The comparative poverty of Yąnomamö material culture is more than compensated for by the richness and complexity of their theological concepts, myths, and legends.

One of the distinctive features of Yąnomamö cosmology and theology is the opportunity it provides for inventiveness. Individuals can and do modify concepts, embellish them, improve on them and, in general, use their imaginations when trafficking in myths or concepts of the soul and afterlife. In short, there is room for thinkers in Yąnomamö culture.

The result of this is that many variants of the same basic myth can be found over a relatively small area. Indeed, each village will contain people who tell the myth a slightly different way; the basic elements remain the same each time, but personal views are interjected and reflect the idiosyncracies of the narrator. The Yąnomamö appear to enjoy these intellectual exercises, for in myth and cosmology they are able to demonstrate their personal abilities as users of their language, the true language of man.

THE COSMOS The Yąnomamö conceive of the external world as having an origin, boundaries, supernatural beings, and a specific nature.

The cosmos is comprised of four parallel layers, lying horizontally and located one on top of the other (see Fig. 2–4b). They are like inverted platters: gently curved, thin, circular, rigid, and having two surfaces, top and bottom.

The uppermost layer is the "tender" plane: *duku kö misi*. At the present time, it is "empty" or "void" (*brukr*), but some things had their origins there in the distant past. These moved down to other layers. Today, the uppermost layer is sometimes described as being "an old woman" (*sua pata*), a phrase used to describe an abandoned garden or a female who is no longer capable of producing offspring. This layer does not figure prominently in the everyday life of the Yąnomamö; it is merely something that is there and once had a function.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

The next layer is called *hadu kã misi:* sky layer. It is made of earth on the top surface and provides the eternal home for the souls of the departed. A complete replica of life on earth is to be found on top of *hadu*, except that the inhabitants are spirits of men, not real men. They garden, make witchcraft, hunt, eat, and in general do what living man does. Everything that exists on earth has a counterpart on *hadu*, a sort of mirror image, although the activities of the two groups of objects and beings are independent of each other.

The bottom surface of *hadu* is the visible portion of the sky. The celestial beings are attached to this surface and move across it. It is not thought to be very far above the earth, since many of my informants asked me if I had crashed into it when I flew in an airplane.

Man dwells below the sky on "this layer": *hei kã misi*. It originated when a piece of *hadu* broke off and fell to a lower level. This layer is a vast jungle, sprinkled with innumerable Yąnomamö villages. These are conceived to be located on earth, as shown in Fig. 2-4c. Even foreigners are thought to live in a type of house that resembles the Yąnomamö dwelling; after all, foreigners derived from the Yąnomamö by a process of degeneration.

Finally, the plane underneath this layer is almost barren. A single village of spirit-men is found here, the Amahiri-teri. A long time ago, after the earth layer was formed by a piece of *hadu*, another chunk of *hadu* fell down and crashed through earth. It hit earth at a place where the Amahiri-teri lived, carrying their village down to the bottom layer. Unfortunately, only their *shabono* and gardens were carried with the piece of *hadu*. Hence, the Amahiri-teri have no neighborhood (*sriibi*) in which to hunt for game, and so they send their spirits up to earth to capture the souls of living children and eat them. There is a constant struggle between the evil spirits of Amahiri-teri shamans and the evil spirits of shamans on this layer, earth: They send malevolent demons against each other and preoccupy themselves with defending their respective villages from evil spirits.

The Amahiri-teri people lived at the time of the *no hadabö*, the first men. These original Yąnomamö were distinct from living man in that they were part spirit (*yai*) and part human. When they died, they became *yai*, spirits. *No hadabö* means, literally, "those who are now dead"; in a cosmological context, it refers to the time of the first beings.

THE FIRST BEINGS The first beings cannot be accounted for. The Yąnomamö simply presume that the cosmos originated with these people. Most of them, and there were many, had a specific function, such as creating a useful plant or object. They figure prominently in mythology. Many of them bear the names of plants and animals that are important in the Yąnomamö economy, and the first beings are considered to be the spirits of these. I will relate a few specific tales about some of these first beings, retaining where possible the Yąnomamö narrative style.

One of the first beings was called Boreawä, or simply Bore. He was the first to acquire plantains, the staple of the Yąnomamö diet. Because he had plantains first, he was the headman (*pata dodibiwä*) of the first beings. Boreawä did not tell the others that he had plantains, as he did not want to share them. At that time, the first beings ate only dirt and animals, as there was no domesticated food. One day another of the first beings, Horonama, got caught in a rain so he took refuge in a sheltered place in the jungle. He was lost and did not know whose neighborhood he was in. By luck, he took refuge in the very place where Boreawä had hidden his cultivated plantains. Horonama, a dirt eater,

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

have chronic warfare, results in a distinctive settlement pattern and system of alliances that permits groups of people to exploit a given area over a relatively long period of time. Finally, the Yanomamö explain the nature of man's ferocity and origin in myth and legend, articulating themselves intellectually with the observable, real world.

Thus, each individual Yanomamö enters the world with the physical, social, and ideological traditions at his disposal that will permit him to confront and adjust to the jungle, his neighbors, and the demons that cause sickness. The cosmos is ordered and orderly, in *hadu* as it is on earth.